



**Message by Mr. Juan Somavia,  
Director-General of the International Labour Office  
on the occasion of  
International Day for the Eradication of Poverty  
(17 October 2007)**

People everywhere understand that the sustainable route to poverty eradication is through the opportunity and reward of decent work. We can minimize poverty by maximizing productive employment. As the global community marks this year's International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, I would like to highlight an innovative way the multilateral system is taking action to respond to that core demand.

Every organization has policies that affect employment and poverty reduction. The key challenge is addressing how best we can work together to share knowledge and advance our common goals.

Over the course of the past year, UN organizations, the WTO and International Financial Institutions have been working with the ILO on a Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work. This spring, the Toolkit won endorsement at the highest level by the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) chaired by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Each agency has been tasked with assessing how it is taking into account employment and decent work in its policies, programmes and activities, including its poverty reduction strategies. In other words, this Toolkit is serving as a "lens" for each agency to take stock of how its strategies affect the quantity and quality of jobs and to determine where and how improvements could be made.

In the coming months, this initiative will be supplemented with an interactive knowledge sharing website which will enable every agency to share its know-how, research findings, data and good practices on improving employment and decent work outcomes.

This practical approach facilitates UN system-wide efforts to achieve better policy coherence and "deliver as one" on the internationally agreed priority of poverty eradication through more and better jobs. Indeed, the Toolkit is helping to unify the efforts of UN agencies and equipping them to work more effectively with national constituents to translate the growing political and economic demand for decent work into concrete policies, programmes and activities.

Already some UN Country Teams are adapting the Decent Work Toolkit to support making employment and decent work a central objective of national development frameworks. This approach also holds enormous promise for application by many others, including parliamentarians and local authorities.

There is no single solution to wiping out poverty. But decent work—the promotion of rights, employment, social protection and dialogue—will always be at the heart of successful policies to get there. By pooling our efforts to answer people's demand for a fair chance at a decent job, we will go a long way to eradicating poverty.

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